

SPEAKING FLUENCY IMPROVEMENT IN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH THE USE OF MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

Speaking fluency is an important aspect for a proper degree of proficiency in any language. English language proficiency is based on the individual performance at it. How much we can understand and be understood depends on how natural and easily we can speak a certain language. For that reason, it is important to describe how speaking fluency interacts within English language. Also, it is important to consider how fluency can be related to music and how much influence music has over it. Considering this, the main purpose of this review article is to examine the ways in which exposure to music may help to improve speaking fluency in EFL students. Aspects related to the commonalities between music and speaking are explored, as well as their application in the teaching of English as a foreign language. The highlight the importance of considering the use of strategies that incorporate a variety of music related activities to promote student engagement and speaking fluency. Results from this research may be useful for future studies regarding speaking fluency and speaking abilities overall.

Key Words: ability – efl – fluency – music - speaking activities

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RESUMEN

La fluidez al hablar es un aspecto importante para un grado adecuado de competencia en cualquier idioma. El dominio de la lengua inglesa se basa en el rendimiento individual en ella. La capacidad de entender y hacerse entender depende de la naturalidad y la facilidad con la que podamos hablar un determinado idioma. Por ello, es importante describir cómo interactúa la fluidez del habla en la lengua inglesa. También es importante considerar cómo la fluidez puede relacionarse con la música y cuánta influencia tiene la música sobre ella. Teniendo en cuenta esto, el objetivo principal de este artículo de revisión es examinar las formas en que la exposición a la música puede ayudar a mejorar la fluidez del habla en los estudiantes de EFL. Se exploran aspectos relacionados con los puntos en común entre la música y el habla, así como su aplicación en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Se destaca la importancia de considerar el uso de estrategias que incorporen una variedad de actividades relacionadas con la música para promover el compromiso de los estudiantes y la fluidez del habla. Los resultados de esta investigación pueden ser útiles para futuros estudios sobre la fluidez y la capacidad de hablar en general.

Palabras Clave: actividades del habla - efl - fluidez - habilidad – música

Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging but extremely important task in our society nowadays (Manivannan, 2019). Students usually develop a proper level of proficiency in skills such as listening or reading, but they show to have special problems with pronunciation, specifically in speech fluency; even though this is one of the most important steps to develop proficiency in a given language. This obstacle makes students speak very poorly, as if they were robots or machines (Vargas, 2015). In response to this need, Arbib has considered music as an important tool to improve students' speech and to make teachers' work easier and much more effective (2013).

Music and language have some features in common, and one of the most important is the feature of generativity. According to Maess and Koelsch (2001) "both (music and language) afford complex combinatoriality and unlimited generativity via a few simple

nonblending (particulate) elements into composite, individually distinctive patterns” (p. 540). This previous statement shows that the connection and relationship between music and language is considerably close and symbiotic.

They also suggest that music’s power to form complex patterns (enabled by its generativity), its frequent repetition of elements (in comparison with language), together with its iconicity (i.e., its exploitation of biologically significant aspects of sound) endow it with an ambiguity and an immediacy that can be emotionally compelling. Language’s capacity to formulate and exchange complex propositions allows it to represent an infinite variety of meanings and frees it (Maess & Koelsch, 2001; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019).

Moreover, concrete and noticeable benefits in adult learners’ pronunciation were found after these students were effectively exposed to instrumental music during an intensive English course (Puhl, 1989; Heidari & Araghi, 2015). Murphey explains that this improvement may be possible because the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than words are spoken with more pauses between utterances, and there is repetition of vocabulary and structures. These factors allow learners to understand and relate to the songs (Murphey, 1992; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019).

It is also important to consider that songs’ lyrics have flexible meaning which gives the students the opportunity to develop different interpretations, and to learn valuable language-meaning chunks that enforce them to speak more confidently and fluently (Moi, 2002). By examining and understanding the different connections music and language have, teachers and students can take a lot of advantage of the time learners are consciously or unconsciously exposed to English music. Music would become an interesting tool to develop many language skills in students, specially connected speech abilities, through the repetition and effective exposure to English songs.

English language proficiency is based on the individual performance at it. How much we can understand and be understood depends on how natural and easily we can speak a certain language. For that reason, it is important to describe how speaking fluency interacts within English language. Also, it is important to consider how fluency can be related to music and how much influence music has over it. Considering this, the main purpose of this review article is to examine the ways in which exposure to music may help to improve speaking fluency in EFL students.

SPEAKING FLUENCY

Fillmore's Speaking Fluency Dimensions

Language proficiency is a complex level of language development, which is composed by the proper development of some abilities. These abilities are developed by practice and time, and among them, there is speech fluency. Speech fluency may be considered or defined as a way of measuring how well a person speaks a language (Fillmore, 1979; Maisa, 2018)). It is exhibited by people when speaking, or when reading in public (Logan, 2015, p. 4). This type of fluency is basically related to any physical demonstration of linguistic oral expression in real-life communicative situations.

According to Götz (2013), fluency is an epiphenomenon to which many individual (and interrelated) factors contribute. Fillmore (1979) proposed four main characteristics or dimensions of speech fluency. First, the ability to talk at length with few pauses, also known as talkativeness; it might vary from one speaker to another according to their brain communicative processing speed. Secondly, the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned, and semantically dense sentences, which can be also defined as succinctness, and it affects directly the listeners' message comprehension. The third dimension is the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts, also be defined as flexibility; it is closely related to the capacity to adapt to any communicative situation and context. Finally, as the fourth dimension, there is the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use, which some scholars prefer to name as creativity, and it is the ability that any speaker has to create infinite messages and linguistic expressions from a limited number of phonemes (Fillmore, 1979; Maisa, 2018)

Starkweather's Speaking Fluency Dimensions

These four dimensions were later expanded by Starkweather by the addition of four more dimensions that are more directly related to physical features of speech production. In first place, Starkweather proposed "continuity", which is the connectedness of sounds, syllables, and words within a spoken message (Starkweather, 1984; Maruthy, Venugopal, & Parakh, 2017). Continuity refers to the proper articulation of utterances in speech and how the lack of accuracy in this process interferes negatively with the messages' comprehension.

In second place, the author proposes the "rate". It is the speed at which a spoken message is delivered (Starkweather, 1984; Maruthy, Venugopal, & Parakh, 2017). This dimension varies considerably according to the different accents that any language may

have. For example, the rate at which an American person speaks is noticeably different to the rate a person from Scotland or Wales shows, even though all of them speak the same language. The rate is also determined by the speaker's preference when speaking. Nevertheless, there is an unwritten, but socially accepted, rate to speak according to the country and context in which a speaker is expressing.

In third place, rhythm is proposed. This concept refers to the prosodic patterns within a spoken message. It is closely related and determined by the intonation and the speakers' need according to the communicative situation. And finally, Starkweather presents the effort, and he expresses that it is "the amount of energy a speaker expends when speaking". The amount of time spent in speaking and the conditions in which it is done affects the speakers' performance considerably (Starkweather, 1984; Maruthy, Venugopal, & Parakh, 2017).

Some other authors have developed and deepened even more in the field of speech fluency proposing other possible features of fluency, such as "stability" (Kleinow & Smith, 2000; Smith & Goffman, 1998; Van Riper, 1971; Yaruss, 1997; Dalton, 2018) and naturalness (Nichols, 1966; Parrish, 1951; Edge, 2012). On one hand, the concept of stability reflects repeated measurements of speech performance. That is, how a person performs over time. Considering that as time passes the body organs involved in speech production are activated, they might get tired and it would affect a speaker's fluency (Starkweather, 1984; Maruthy, Venugopal, & Parakh, 2017).

On the other hand, naturalness in speech is seen as what sounds normal or natural, and allows the listener's attention to focus on the message rather than the speech pattern (Parrish, 1951; Martin, Haroldson, & Triden, 1984; Ingham, Martin, Haroldson, Onslow, & Leney, 1985; Onslow, Hayes, Hutchins, & Newman, 1992; Nichols, 1966; Edge, 2012). Naturalness is the developed ability to speak and express orally, without showing it as a difficult activity. In other words, it refers to how used or comfortable a person seems to be when speaking a language.

SPEAKING FLUENCY AND MUSIC

Common Aspects between Music and Speaking Fluency

Current interest in the relationship between music and language responds to the conception that these two uniquely human capacities evolved from protomusical and

protolinguistic speech (Arbib & Lerdhal, 2013; Brown, 2000; Darwin, 1876; Fitch, 2010; Rousseau, 1852). According to Arbib and Lerdhal (2013), there are many aspects in which language and music are related, but communication is the most relevant for both sides as music involves a wide variety of sound combinations that carry extremely subtle emotional meanings.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention that in both language and music, there is a syntactic relationship between linguistics syntax and the syntax of phonology (Arbib & Lerdhal, 2013). Language and music share the characteristics that as syntax systems they are capable of generating a potentially infinite set of outputs from a considerably small number of elements and principles (Merker, 2002). Arbib and Lerdhal propose four abstract aspects in a syntactic hierarchy: a string of objects, nested groupings of these objects, a prominence grid assigned to the objects, and a headed hierarchy of the grouped objects (Arbib & Lerdhal, 2013).

Regarding strings and groupings, Arbib and Lerdhal (2013) explain that probably the most basic correspondence between music and language is the one that exists between syllable and note. They state that a single syllable usually corresponds to a single note. This shows that there is a direct correspondence between music and phonology. Considering grids, according to these authors, there are two different kinds in language and music: a stress grid and a metrical grid. On one hand, stress grid stands for a relative syllabic stress, which is usually wrongly called “metrical grid”. On the other hand, a linguistic metrical grid represents strong and weak periodicities in a poetic line against which stresses do or do not align. (Arbib & Lerdhal, 2013).

Music and language share several features and sensory-perceptual networks, even though they are two different cognitive domains (Moreno, Lee, Janus, & Bialystok, 2015). These features make language learning and music closely related and present music as an interesting tool to develop speech fluency in students. These two areas of human development use the same acoustic cues (i.e., pitch, timing, and timbre) to reach the meaning of a word and rely on systematic sound–symbol representations. They also require a bunch of other skills, such as analytic listening, selective attention, auditory memory, and the ability to integrate discrete units of information into a coherent and meaningful percept (Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010; Patel, 2011).

The Benefits of the Use of Music on Speaking Fluency

The use or performance of the skills lately mentioned activates the brain and allows it to store new knowledge in the brain's memory. This process is a phenomenon also known as "transfer". (White, Hutka, Williams, & Moreno, 2013; Moreno & Bidelman, 2013) According to Jonides (2004), transfer normally occurs when new and trained tasks recruit overlapping processing components and engage shared brain regions.

This engagement creates a "bridge" through which knowledge and novel skills, such as phonological references and speech rhythm patterns, travel until being stored in the deepest levels of memory and brain. Clearly, the connection between music and language in the human brain is considerably close. Additionally, ongoing reviews in music literature have also shown the advantages of music into varied social and behavioral fields such as language, inhibition, reading, and verbal intelligence; at an extremely wide range of age (Slevc, 2012; Gerry, Unrau, & Trainor, 2012; Moreno & Bidelman, 2013; Patel, 2011; Parbery-Clark, Anderson, Hittner, & Kraus, 2012).

According to Peters (2009), learners must perform the following six tasks when learning a language to complete a proper transfer process, and music is an invaluable tool to strengthen each one. In first place, he mentions choosing and being able to remember chunks from inputs they receive. Then, comparing the recently learned chunks with the ones that had already been learned. After that, connecting learned chunks with other ones that might be familiar or similar in different ways, including all the linguistic aspects of a language: pragmatics, semantics, phonology, and syntax. Additionally, Peters mentions dividing the chunks into some known subparts. After, storing the encountered chunks in the lexicon repertoire and discarding those that may be less useful. Finally, the author talks about constantly trying and revising these new learned chunks in later stages (Peters, 2009).

Moreover, songs give us the opportunity to explore a huge amount of different objectives at the same time. They help us to practice and strengthen many skills including the following domains: linguistic (vocabulary, syntax, phonology), communicative (speech acts, appropriateness to the context, greeting formulas), cultural (current interests, characteristics and historical facts) (Engh, 2013).

Castelo (2018) explains that a song, since it includes lyrics, allows EFL students to train their reading comprehension abilities. He explains that songs are considerably interesting resources to create oral production. For example, tasks as singing, reading the lyrics out loud, dramatizing parts of the text, expressing an opinion on the song, and

debating on the topic are excellent pedagogical strategies to use with music.

Moreover, it is a piece of artwork, which means that it helps us to know and understand the culture “from within” and increasing our will or motivation to discover and know each other (Souza, 2014; Keskin, 2011). Songs are also easy to use in classes because they are not extremely long (Asensi, 1995; Susmansky Bacal, 2014). They almost always present repetitions that cause students overload learning with a huge amount of new information that they might not be able to handle at a time. Additionally, this set of repetitions promote learning in a friendly, interesting and more comfortable way to learners (Engh, 2013; Asensi, 1995; Susmansky Bacal, 2014).

Furthermore, music presents a broad spectrum of language registers: e.g. literary, slang, lyrical, colloquial and current registers; and different types of texts: e.g. descriptive, epistolary, narrative, conversational, poetic, etc. Music allows us to discover and explore a considerably interesting set of options about how to use literature in the foreign language classroom (Betti, 2012; Asensi, 1995; Susmansky Bacal, 2014).

Speaking Fluency and Teaching

According to the study ran by Gholamhossein (2017), success in EFL students' fluency learning could be based on the amount of effective input or exposure the learners have to the language. Because of this reason, teachers should give their students as many possibilities to be in contact with the language to make learning more effective. In this case, music may be an awesome tool to provide students with the possibility to be exposed to language at any time they can and when doing almost any activity: from working to walking, from resting to doing exercise, etc.

Hismanoglu explains that “a successful learner is successful because he uses most learning strategies frequently, and if less successful learners knew this fact, they would become more successful” (Hismanoglu, 2000; Hardan, 2013). A learning strategy can be defined as “an extremely powerful learning tool” (O'Malley, Michael, Uhl, & Gloria, 1985) and this tool or strategy empowers the successful learners in their learning endeavor (Massood Yazdani & Rahele Najaf, 2013).

In another study, Yang (2014) based his research on the perception and point of view that developing speaking fluency is an important strand in language learning, although the general status of speaking is not valued as it should be. In this sense, it is important to

recognize that defining and measuring fluency is a complicated task that requires the application of effective teaching techniques and strategies. Therefore, establishing standards for assessing it, is also complicated.

In addition to these previous concepts, Wood (2001) adds the concept speech rate, which he explains is an extremely important performance indicator of measuring fluency, because speech rate shows the overall fluency of speaking. Moreover, Rigganbach (1991) notes the phenomena of “pause” and “pause filler” (Bui & Huang, 2018).

Speaking fluency is also one of the most complex and a unique skill that human beings develop, so reaching a fluent speaking level is certainly important and complex. Children start acquiring it in infancy and it takes all of childhood to develop through interaction between the child and all other members of the language community (Levelt, 1989; Renkema & Schubert, 2018). This interaction strengthens children’s perception of the world and develop communicative abilities from a very young age. Moreover, speaking fluently serves any person to promote the ideas that are in his mind. In other words, speaking, and especially public speaking, is the bridge between one’s mind and the world (Hannan, Newman, & Kinger, 2015).

Considering this complexity, the importance of strengthening and developing our students’ speaking fluency in the EFL class is noted. In order to accomplish this task, as teachers, we should be able to adapt and apply as many teaching and learning techniques as possible. According to research, any language is basically compound by the integration and interaction of four main macro skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing (Barreiro, 2007; Goundareva, 2012). From these four, speaking is one of the most important ones to communication because it is essential to perform a conversation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

MUSIC’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMORY, EMOTIONS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In the process of learning of a second or foreign language there are many factors that have certain influence on it. Two of these aspects are memory and emotions. In first place, memory is an important feature that allows us to learn new things, especially a language, because it is in charge of keeping important information in our brains and making it available to us when it is consciously and unconsciously necessary. Memory also serves as a sort of storage place in our brains where information is put over time meanwhile we perform different tasks (Baddeley & Hitch, 2018, p. 91 - 106).

Regarding how memory is related to any learning process, some authors refer to the “working memory model” (Baddeley, 1992; Siegel, 2020). The main objective of this model is to explain or show how mental representations inside the brain are kept active during complicated cognitive and intellectual activity. This model consists of two parts called “slave-systems.” These are the phonological loop and the visuospatial scratchpad. They are in charge of storing visual and verbal information (Buchsbbaum, 2013, p. 496).

These both slave-systems are not directly involved in the analysis of sensory stimuli. They are seen as tanks that contain highly mentally processed information. Both of them are monitored and controlled by a superior cognitive managing system: the central executive system. In one hand, the visuospatial scratchpad consists in a single storage component. In the other hand, the phonological loop is compound by two sub components: the phonological store (also known as the storage component) and the articulatory rehearsal process (also known as the maintenance component) (Buchsbbaum, 2013).

The phonological store is able to retain speech-based information during a short period of time before it decays. The articulatory rehearsal process has the role of counteracting this decay through refreshing the information contained in the phonological store periodically. In order to accomplish it, the articulatory rehearsal process uses sub vocal speech (Buchsbbaum, 2013, p. 496).

Some authors allege that there is enough scientific evidence about the role of one aspect of working memory in language learning and speaking fluency development (Baddeley & Hitch, 2018), and they present the concept of inner speech as an interesting example of this. This relationship between memory and learning can be seen in simple everyday situations, such as when after reading a phone number or hearing it from an operator we try to keep the digits in mind. Buchsbbaum explains that:

There is a period of time in between receiving the number and dialing it where the ordered sequence of digits must be maintained in working memory; and during this interval most people will “repeat the numbers to themselves,” either overtly or covertly, as a way of keeping the digits conscious and accessible (Buchsbbaum, 2013, p. 496).

With this everyday life example, Buchsbbaum (2013, p. 496) describes two essential aspects of working memory. First, he explains how beneficial sub vocal rehearsal is to memory performance. He alleges that blocking this type of rehearsal through “articulatory suppression” has a hugely strong negative consequence on verbal items recalling performance, and suggests that sub vocal rehearsal is actually useful as a cognitive

strategy.

The second aspect is that either when the rehearsal is sub vocal or out loud, it doesn't affect its usefulness and benefit to learning. In fact, some studies have shown that verbal rehearsal is beneficial to memory and learning, either by representing the vocal items out loud and making them audible to the auditory perceptual system through external sensory feedback loop; even if it is sub vocal, which means that it does not produce any type of external auditory feedback (Buchsbbaum, 2013).

Memory and music share certain features and regarding this issue Jäncke (2008) explains that “musical sounds, like all auditory signals, unfold over time. It is therefore necessary for the auditory system to integrate the sequentially ordered sounds into a coherent musical perception” (p. 21). This transformation process could be a feature of working memory, in which auditory units are temporarily stored and combined into a single percept as a musical element like rhythm, melody or other. This correlation indicates to the authors that there seems to be a deep overlapping in memory (in this case working memory) between verbal and musical stimuli. It is possible that for this reason musicians tend to show a slightly superior verbal working memory, especially in language like Chinese and other tonal languages (Jäncke, 2008; Schendel & Palmer, 2007; Albouy, et al., 2019; Bravo, et al., 2020).

In fact, according to the neurological study developed by Vanessa Slumming and other researchers within orchestral musicians, they found that their brains had more gray matter in the frontal cortex. This part is in charge of accommodating neural networks that are involved in many essential working memory processes (Sluming et. al., 2007; Sorati & Behne, 2020). Taking this information into account, and recognizing the factual and positive connection between musical instruction and verbal memory functions, it is possible to consider that the process of learning music (or learning through music) helps to improve the learning process of verbal skills (Jäncke, 2008; Bravo, et al., 2020). Furthermore, these authors also point out that there are bidirectional associations between the memory systems for language and melody.

In second place, emotions are also an important aspect that influences learning, for that reason it is important to understand what an emotion is. Most researchers agree on the fact that emotions have these three characteristics: a) they are affective reactions that can be described and determined nearly precisely (in one or two words), and that are directly related to a cause, event or incident; b) situations evoke emotions and these both are bound

to one another depending on the degree of importance it has for an individual; c) after an individual experiences a specific emotion, the emotion becomes the center of awareness of that person regarding the situation where he experienced it. In the educational field this can be seen in a student's attitude or degree of enjoyment in learning, or in a teacher's anger provoked by students' misbehavior. Usually, the more important an event or moments is for someone, the deeper the experience of emotions is. For this reason, learners only experience emotions (either positive or negative) when the learning process or the learning topic is important or relevant to them. (Otto, Euler, & Mandl, 2000; Op 't Eynde & Turner, 2006; Hascher, 2010; Holm, Björn, Laine, & Korhonen, 2020):

Therefore, it is possible to define emotions as "ways of being". They are holistic episodes which contain behavioral, physiological and psychological elements. They have an extremely close relationship with cognitive processes, motivation and acting. Moreover, it is important to highlight that emotions are expressed and observed through their representation and feeling in our bodies (Hascher, 2010, pp. 13 - 28). Emotions are compound by a set of multicomponent aspects that are explained in the multicomponent approach of emotion. This approach's main objective is to explain the form of an emotion, but it does not predict discrepancies in emotional experiences (Scherer, 1987; Hascher, 2010; Carneiro, Eusébio, & Caldeira, 2019). It considers the affective, cognitive, expressive, motivational and physiological components.

Regarding emotions and their relationship with learning, there is evidence that they have a deep influence on the humans' cognitive processes and analysis. Emotions affect attention, perception, memory, reasoning, problem solving, and learning. This power that emotions seem to have over attention, especially when motivating action and behavior, is extremely connected to learning processes (Tyng, Amin, Saad, & Malik, 2017, p. 1454). According to certain studies, emotion and cognition processes are operated at a mental level in two separate systems. However, what is interesting about them is that even though they are separate, these both systems keep interacting one with the other. In one hand, the "cool cognitive system" is based on the hippocampus, which is related to cognitive functions with neutral emotional charge and cognitive controls. In the other hand, the "hot emotional system" is based on the amygdala, which is in charge of emotional processing and responses to unconditioned emotional stimuli, like conditions that evoke fear. (Tyng, Amin, Saad, & Malik, 2017, p. 1454)

The interaction between these two systems have been evidenced by the studies of

Dolcos et. al. (2011) and Okon-Singer et. al. (2015). These studies showed that the symbiosis of these two systems is in charge of meditation and modulations between one another. In fact, it has been proved that emotions influence the formation of the memory system that depends directly to the hippocampus, which means that they also influence learning and memory. This provides an understanding that even though emotional and cognitive or intellectual mental processes are usually conceptualized as two independent areas, they are actually extremely connected. Even to the point where emotions powerfully modify cognitive appraisals and memory processes and vice versa (Tyng et. al., 2017).

In this case, music appears to be a great tool to develop this symbiosis because it has the ability to evoke several different and strong emotions in the brain. Although in the past it might have been seen differently, currently there is almost no doubt that when listening to music it is possible to perceive and feel emotions in response to it. For this reason, music may be a particularly effective stimulus to moderate emotional states. In other words, it helps to control emotions in different situations, and a key factor to this influence is the self-selection of music (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015).

Some researchers explain that listening to self-selected music to change certain mood is more effective than trying to modify it externally or by manipulation. They claim that music listening is in fact associated with emotional arousal, and that this has been proved by using physiological measures such as heart rate, respiration rate, and electro dermal activity (Sleigh & McElroy, 2014; Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). Moreover, music is also useful to control stress levels in a person. According to Thoma and other researchers, participants who listen to music they consider to be relaxing have shown a more efficient and faster recovery from a following stressing situation than those who just listen to the sounds of nature or do not listen to anything. This recovery was measured taking into account the salivary cortisol levels of the participants (Thoma, et al., 2013).

Other aspects to take into account when analyzing music's influence over people's mood or emotions are the listeners' age and the context. Usually, older adults tend to experience emotions deeper and more intensely. Also, listening to music with close company seems to have a positive impact on emotional responses to stimuli and situations. Actually, an individual could experience more than one emotion at the same time when listening to a piece of music. Aspects like fast-tempo and major modes are considered to sound happier in music than slow-tempo and minor modes. So when there is an opposite combination of these elements, for example a song with music slow-tempo but in a major

mode, it is possible to create a piece of music with conflicting cues. When people listen to this type of music they tend to respond with “happy” and “sad” keys at the same time, which shows that they are experiencing both emotions simultaneously (Larsen & Stastny, 2011; Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015).

Music is almost undoubtedly able to induce a considerable amount of emotions in an individual through different mechanisms, and this assertion reveals the deep relationship that exists between the music we listen and the emotions we experience. Swaminathan and Schellenberg state this by saying that “the available research supports folk psychological ideas of a deep connection between music and emotions. Emotions influence what music listeners choose to hear, and music influences how they feel” (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015).

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH THE USE OF MUSIC

Teaching English as a language is a field that has a very broad spectrum of tools or techniques through which pedagogical objectives can be reached. Most of the time, teachers tend to use those ways of teaching which they feel more comfortable with. Although, it might be important to focus on how effective the pedagogical instruments we use to teach are, instead of how used we are to them. For this reason, music could be considered an interesting element to use in our classes.

Music as a useful tool for English Language Teaching

Music is a type of art in which sounds are arranged in a way that is pleasant to listen to. It could be expressed or played through singing or by playing an instrument or a group of instruments at the same time (Oxford Press University, 2020). Although, the term “music” is very generic, because music is divided into various genres such as classical, popular or pop, rock and roll, rap and folk music. Bennet (2019) explains that “additionally, within the genres there are more genres and subdivisions (e.g., enka, metal, etc.)” (Bennett, 2019, pp. 6 - 16), this makes the classification and description of music in styles and genres extremely broad with several options from where to choose. Further, not all songs are appropriate for English classes. Abbott (2002) explains that when selecting a song to use in an English language class there are certain aspects of it that we must take into consideration, such as: clarity of vocalization and enunciation, tempo, amount of repetition, word order, language level, stress, and the extent of metaphorical usage (Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019).

Furthermore, the same author considers that songs from certain music genres should

not be used when teaching, e.g. heavy metal and rap, because vocalization in these genres does not show good diction, so it would be way more difficult for students to understand and repeat the utterances singers sing. Moreover, songs from these genres tend to have offensive and rude lyrics, and according to the author this type of lyrics must be avoided (Abbott, 2002; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019). Choosing the proper songs to use in the classroom is one of the most important parts when preparing a lesson with speaking activities based on the use of music. There are some aspects that need to be taken into account when choosing them such as satisfying the specific characteristics of the students' age (Delibegovic Dzan & Pejic, 2016), the songs' types and purposes (House, 1997; Karea, 2016), the proper correspondence between students' age and English level with the type of song (Delibegovic Dzan & Pejic, 2016), and the potential to motivate students (Delibegovic Dzan & Pejic, 2016; Jolly, 1975; Shin, 2006; Fonseca-Mora, Toscano-Fuentes, & Wermke, 2011).

Traditional songs, or songs written for young learners tend to be well known and carry out a big amount of cultural content; therefore, they serve as a great tool to teach about English speaking countries' history and sociocultural phenomena. On the other hand, songs written specifically for teaching English are based on developing certain linguistic aspect or skill and could make them more artificial, which in turn may affect student engagement (House, 1997; Karea, 2016). Ur (1992) considers that these songs specially composed to teach vocabulary and language structures help support oral production and complement English text books. Authentic songs, on the other hand, are basically composed to reflect cultural aspects and ideals, and to entertain listeners (Ur, 1992; Ali, 2018).

Murphey suggests two more groups: Jazz chants and Total Physical Response (TPR) songs. He defines jazz chants as rhythmic expressions in a situational context without background music. This type of music is essentially useful to strengthen listening comprehension skills, intonation, vocabulary, particular language structures and speaking rhythm. Total Physical Response (TPR) songs, on the other hand, require students to give a physical response to what they hear and sing (Murphey, 1992; Pavia, Webb, & Faez, 2019). Delibegovic and Pejic (2016) argue that it is crucial to choose songs that suit children's level of English as well as their interest and that especially with children it is highly recommended to use simple and catchy songs, because children love to repeat phrases over and over. Moreover, they also like to move which makes songs a super useful and valuable tool for an integral education (Martin C., 2000; Hood & Tobutt, 2015). This in turn may allow students to experience emotions and feelings, and when supported by movements and colorful visual

aid, strengthen children's learning process and maintain students motivated

According to Marjanen (2016) language learning starts with interaction. This interaction is developed in young kids and babies in the form of mother-infant interaction. Furthermore, some researchers state that this interaction occurs because infants and mothers tend to coordinate their responses to each other alternating their rhythms. They do not appear to synchronize their speeches (Dissanayake, 2000; Marjanen K., 2016). This mother-infant interaction occurs at the very early stage of interaction in little babies, approximately at the age of two months (Marjanen K., 2009; Marjanen K., 2016). Presumably, the words and utterances used by mothers to communicate with their kids, with real semantic meanings, are not understood and experienced by the infant as a verbal message, but as musical features and relations (Dissanayake, 2000; Marjanen K., 2016).

Authors also propose that a sense of timing is extremely important in verbal and non-verbal communication for little kids and language development, and music is a pedagogical tool which is really useful to develop, support, and strengthen this sense of timing (Marjanen K., 2016). Marjanen (2016) also suggests that other components of music make it a very useful and important tool for teaching; these include beat, meter, dynamics, harmony, melody, pitch, rhythm, tempo and timber (Estrella, 2019). Marjanen (2016) explains that all these elements of music must be included in English language teaching as well, as a part of the framework when planning the musical activities for a group of students, in order to create a musical experience as a support for language learning.

When planning a foreign language lesson, it is extremely important to emphasize and recognize the common aspects that learning music and acquiring a language have. Marjanen (2009) explains that, like in early childhood, music teaching starts always with rhythm, using one's own voice and body (Marjanen K., 2009). This process of music learning since its origins is always based on two main senses: touching and hearing, and their influence appear at conscious and unconscious levels. This duality may be considered as an important reason for the wide and various possibilities of music used for education purposes (Nurila & Syrjälä, 1998; Marjanen K., 2016).

Moreover, Marjanen also shows that the combination between theoretical and practical knowledge is a key element of music as a pedagogical tool. The author emphasizes that theoretical knowledge is to support practical solutions: theory and practice are not obverses to one another (Marjanen K., 2016). During the process of structuring theoretical information and input, in order to reach certain cognitive goals, the affective area and

emotions of a student are highly emphasized. For that reason, musical methods serve theory as an energizing factor that brings creativity, life and methodological richness to the teaching process to impact individuals in a holistic way (Nurila & Syrjälä, 1998; Marjanen K., 2016).

Pedagogical Proposals to use music in Young Learners English classes

Regarding music education, Marjanen (2016) notes that it is possible to emphasize it into two main ways: activities and goals set for musical development, learning and growth/music itself and musicality within a child; or activities and goals set for holistic development, learning and growth/having music as a tool to support the child. In this case, it is the second way the one that best fits and explains why music is a useful tool to teach a foreign language. Moreover, the author describes the five main aspects of the holistic development of music perception that must be taken into account when planning a lesson with music as a pedagogical tool: a) psychomotor development, or physical activity created on the basis of psychological processes; b) socio-emotional development; c) Intellectual/cognitive development activities; d) aesthetics, or holistic artistic experiences; e) fun and happiness (Marjanen K., 2016).

Human oral skills are the very first framework or factor that allow us to produce different types of speech. These abilities can be practiced and improved in different ways. For example, by saying rhymes, singing, beat-boxing, and basically using the voice in any possible and versatile way that we could imagine. Oral skills could also be improved and practiced through listening to music, no matter if the focus of the pedagogical activity is the music itself or if it is combined with another task such as painting, moving, playing, writing, etc. Actually, even body skills could be integrated with music and language teaching in activities such as moving to music, dancing or body percussion. Moreover, as a way of varying classes and making them even more dynamic with the use of music, a possibility could be to add real and non-common musical instruments to the classes. Also, we could add more difficult rhythms and speed tempos to the pieces of music that we use depending on the group's musical interests and age rate that we are dealing with (Degrave, 2019,).

Degrave (2019) deepens in this aspect of music as a pedagogical tool in foreign language teaching classes, and classifies music-related teaching methods into three main categories: The use of rhythmical activities, the use of music without lyrics (sound or background music) and the use of songs.

Sounds and Background Music

According to Degrave (2019), several researchers and linguists stand that “listening to non-linguistic sounds or having background music during a task could enhance performance, among others at the linguistic level” (pp. 412 - 420). Tomatis (1991) proposes in his method that students are supposed to train the ear to perceive specific frequencies through active listening. He also states that the voice simply contains what is perceived and received by the ear (Coulter & Suri, 2020). This assumption implies that as human beings we are only capable to reproduce what we already heard or can hear. Tomatis (1991) considers this statement especially relevant for the perception and production of foreign languages. According to him, languages have different frequency ranges, and this difference makes it impossible or extremely hard for native speakers of short frequency ranges to perceive and produce languages with wider frequency ranges (Coulter & Suri, 2020).

As a solution to this problem, Tomatis (1991) developed a method through which participants and students would hear music (often Mozart) or speech, whose sound had been modified to the ear so participants could particularly hear high-frequency sounds, and in that way recover their childhood’s hearing ability to properly recognize the foreign language sounds. This methodology has been also applied in several fields to treat conditions such as attention and motor disorders, dyslexia, or autism; and moreover, non-lyrical music has been used as background to develop language skills (Brancroft, 1991; Degrave, 2019). One example of this is the Suggestopedia method developed by Lozanov (1978), which is still used nowadays in some foreign language learning institutes. This method pretends to relax the students’ state of mind through the use of classical music (often baroque) in the background. According to Lozanov, this type of music played in the background helps the brain become more aware and receptive to learning (Brancroft, 1991; Degrave, 2019).

The improvement of technology during years have led us to a point today in which, thanks to the new imaging technology, it is possible to automatically analyze whether background music help to improve abilities and language skills, which specific mental process is affected and how it is affected by background music. For example, some researchers in France analyzed the neurological process in participants during the encoding of a verbal memory task when background music is being played. According to their results, background music helped participants to easily retrieve the encoded material. They also found out that the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), a region known to be usually

crucial during memory encoding processes, was significantly highly activated during the silence than in music encoding condition, so the facilitatory effect of music during verbal encoding resulted not only in better recognition performance, but also deactivation of DLPFC activity. They concluded that that music helps verbal encoding by facilitating associative and organizational processes (Ferrerri et. al., 2013).

Songs

This is one of the most frequent and common ways of integrating music into the foreign and second language learning classroom. The origins of this multi-skills and also multi-level methodology come from the 1950's through the 1970's, with the Audiolingual Method (Degrave, 2019). The Audiolingual Method is an approach in the teaching of foreign languages based on a system of drills in which the student repeats or adapts model sentences delivered orally or played aloud by the teacher (English Oxford Dictionary, 2020). In this approach, the use of songs transforms the repetition of drills into a more fun and enjoyable activity, and it fits perfectly with the method since songs contain a lot of repetition and redundancy (Kanel, 2000; Degrave, 2019). Taking the audiolingual method as a basis throughout years, several different teachers have developed their own approaches and teaching methods including songs. For example: The Melodic Approach of Mora (Degrave, 2019). This approach's purpose is to follow a similar process learning to that of LI by emphasizing melodic aspects of songs. Through this method, "the EFL teacher of beginners, at the early input stage, would consciously give emphasis to the melody and prosodic features of the structure, pattern, or expression s/he is presenting" (Mora, 2000, pp. 152). There is also the Contemporary Music Approach of Anton. This approach helps to improve and strengthen grammar skills by using and singing songs (Anton, 1990). Despite the specific methodologies, "songs can be used in many different ways in the foreign and second language learning classroom, whether using the song as such, the context, the singer, etc." (Degrave, 2019, p. 420).

Rhythmical Activities

Degrave explains that for many years rhythmical activities have been part of the foreign language learning classroom through intuitive activities performed by teachers, when teaching such as clapping the hands to emphasize the rhythm of speech, annotating certain sentences of the board to indicate the position of the stress in a music score, making gestures to illustrate the speech intonation, etc. (Degrave, 2019). Over the years, some of these activities have become more formal. For example: The English teacher Graham

created a methodology called Jazz Chants, in which he related the rhythms of traditional American jazz to the rhythms of spoken American English. This technique portrays the chants as rhythmic presentations of natural American English and emphasizes intonation and natural stress (Graham, 1993; Degrave, 2019). Degrave (2019) also explains that something similar occurs in Dutch with a type of music called “Taalriedels” (Deen, Van Veen, & Schutte, 2014) or “Taalraps” (Verboog & Ader, 2016). This music style is based on short rap-songs that contain a numerous amount of useful everyday language, and which is being used to teach Dutch.

CONCLUSION

This review article has highlighted the connections that exist between music, language and how this connection may be used to improve English fluency through the use of music activities in the classroom. English Teachers may find it beneficial to apply the principles explored in this review to use music in ways that will help their students develop language fluency. This review is part of a larger study in which the first author implemented a variety of music activities in the classroom to test how these may help in the development of students’ fluency. The findings of this study showed that music did not only improve students’ fluency but help with student engagement and motivation. Considering that the English language is gaining more importance and is seen as an important tool for professional growth and development (Pandey & Pandey, 2014) and the greater demand for fluent English speakers in different areas and social levels justifies the need for more effective and meaningful teaching of the English language, especially in terms of speech fluency (British Council, 2015).

The State Alumni Paraguay organization (SAP), through their scholars’ experiences, shows that many people in Paraguay seek to learn and improve their English proficiency because they want or need to enrich their resumes to find better job opportunities or grow academically through scholarships for postgraduate programs in other countries, such as the USA, Canada, Korea, England, Ireland, and so on (SAP, 2018). Moreover, more than 480 students applied for the BECAL scholarship to study English in an English speaking country in 2019 (BECAL, 2019). Thus, schools and language institutes that apply the recommended approach may be able to train students better improve students’ speech fluency.

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